

Serve Idaho Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism

Review Process and Selection Criteria for 2016-2017 AmeriCorps Programs

Applicant Name/Organization: _____

Program Name: _____

NEW APPLICANT ☐

RECOMPETE APPLICANT ☐

FIXED PRICE APPLICANT ☐

			possible	reviewer
1. Executive Summary	0		0	
2. Program Design	50% (50 points)			
		Problem/Need	9	
		Theory of Change and Logic Model	15	
		Evidence Base	12	
		Notice Priority	3	
		Member Training	4	
		Member Supervision	2	
		Member Experience	3	
		Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification	2	
		TOTAL SECTION 2.	50	
3. Organizational Capacity	25% (25 points)			
		Organizational Background and Staffing	10	
		Compliance and Accountability	15	
		Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees (re-competing applicants and formula grantees only)	0	
		TOTAL SECTION 3.	25	
4. Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy	25% (25 points)			
		Cost Effectiveness	18	
		Budget Adequacy	7	
		TOTAL SECTION 4.	25	
TOTAL SCORE:				/100

Do you recommend this application be sent forward to the Corporation for National and Community Service to be considered for possible AmeriCorps funding? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Reviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Page Limit cannot exceed 15 pages for the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and SF 424 Facesheet, as the pages print out from eGrants.

1. Executive Summary: -0- Points

The applicant will fill in the blanks in the following template to complete the executive summary:

The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [what the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will be]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will engage in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of [Focus Area(s)]*. The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

*If the program is not operating in a CNCS' focus area, omit this sentence.

Fixed Amount grant applicants should list their Other Revenue (see Glossary) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program. CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on www.nationalservice.gov in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Executive Summary:

2. Rationale and Approach/Program Design - 50 points total

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community needs.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
a. PROBLEM/NEED	0	4.5	9	

For all programs, reviewers will consider the quality of your response to the following:

- The community problem/need is clearly defined and aligns with the proposed intervention.
- The community problem/need is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and has been well documented with relevant data.

Applicants will be awarded up to **15 points** for providing a detailed theory of change (logic model) using the Logic Model Worksheet (see attachment to grant application).

A theory of change is a description of how and why a set of activities are expected to lead to early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes over a specified period. A logic model is a graphical representation of program activities and their intended outcomes as depicted in the theory of change.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
b. THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET	0	7.5	15	

► **THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET- 15 POINTS**

Points will be awarded based on quality and completeness of the logic model.

- The applicant's proposed intervention is clearly articulated including the design, target population, and roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant's intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change. The theory of change should be either evidence-informed or evidence-based, meaning that the proposed intervention is guided by the best available research evidence that supports its effectiveness in the evidence section.
- The proposed outcomes represent meaningful progress in addressing the community problem/need identified by the applicant.
- The applicant's AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.

The logic model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
 - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention).
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week.)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level).
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served.) Identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention. **Logic model content that exceeds the three pages will not be reviewed.**

Selection Criteria	No Evidence	Pre-preliminary Evidence	Preliminary Evidence	Moderate Evidence	Strong Evidence	Total Score
c. Evidence Base	0	1-2	3-6	7-9	10-12	

All applicants must include a description of up to two research studies or evaluations in order to earn points, including the following information:

- 1) The date the research or evaluation was completed, and the time period for which the intervention was examined;
- 2) A description of the target population studied (e.g. the demographics);
- 3) The methodology used in the study (e.g.; outcome study, random assignment, regression discontinuity design, or propensity score matching);
- 4) A description of the data, data sources, and data collection methods;
- 5) The outcomes or impacts examined and the study findings; and
- 6) The strength of the findings (e.g. confidence level, statistical power of the study design and statistical significance of findings).

Reviewers will examine the descriptions (and attached studies if relevant) using the following criteria:

- a) How closely the intervention evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant;
- b) The methodological quality and rigor of the studies presented (e.g., sample size and statistical power, internal and/or external validity, use of control or equivalent comparison groups, baseline equivalence and study attrition, etc.);
- c) Strength and consistency of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a meaningful and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels; and
- d) The date of the study, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years.

If the evidence submitted as part of an application does not describe a well-designed and well-implemented evaluation, the applicant will be considered for a lower tier of evidence and related point values.

Requirements associated with the five evidence tiers are described below:

No evidence (0 points) means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have systematically collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

Pre-preliminary evidence (1-2 points) means the applicant has demonstrated data collection experience testing or tracking at least one aspect of its logic model. For example, the applicant has collected systemic and accurate data on one or more of the following: the community need the proposed intervention will address, the program intervention's activities and services delivered, the participation in the intervention by the target population, and/or participant outcomes (for example, performance measurement data or a process evaluation assessing implementation of the intervention).

The data collection process and results must be described fully and the applicant should explain the link between data collection and the relevant component(s) of its logic model. Evidence for the pre-preliminary tier should be described in the Evidence section of the application but does not require submission of supplemental documentation.

Preliminary evidence (3-6 points) means the applicant has described up to two outcome studies about the intervention that yielded promising results for the proposed intervention or a similar intervention that the applicant will replicate with fidelity to the evaluated program model. The ways to demonstrate a preliminary level of evidence are as follows:

- The applicant must describe at least one outcome study that was conducted of their own intervention. This must include a detailed description of the outcome study data from pre and post-tests without a comparison group or post-test comparison between intervention and comparison groups. An outcome study includes data beyond that which is collected as part of routine performance measurement. This description should explain whether the outcome study was conducted internally by the applicant organization or by an entity external to the applicant.

OR

- The applicant must describe at least one random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation (e.g. propensity score matching) that found positive results for the same intervention that the applicant plans to replicate. The description should include details about how the intervention studied and the applicant’s proposed approach are the same and how the applicant will replicate the intervention with fidelity to the program model. The study must have been conducted by an entity external to the organization whose program was studied.

OR

- The applicant may submit evidence from both bullets listed above. In this case, the applicant must provide data from an outcome study of an intervention it has previously implemented (see above) and also proposes to modify their program by replicating another random control trial study or quasi-experimental evaluation. Applicants should describe their previous outcome study and should also describe and submit the study(ies) of the proposed intervention.

Moderate evidence (7-9 points) means the applicant has submitted up to two well-designed and well-implemented studies that evaluated the same intervention described in this application and identified evidence of effectiveness on one or more key desired outcomes of interest as depicted in the applicant’s logic model. Evidence of effectiveness (or positive findings) is determined using experimental design evaluations (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)) or quasi-experimental designs evaluations (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. The ability to generalize the findings from the RCT or QED beyond the study context may be limited (e.g., single-site). The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Moderate** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Strong evidence (10-12 points) means the applicant has demonstrated that the intervention has been tested nationally, regionally, or at the state-level (e.g., multi-site) using a well-implemented QED or RCT. Alternatively, the proposed intervention’s evidence may be based on multiple (up to two) well-designed and well-implemented QEDs or RCTs in different locations or with different populations within a local geographic area. The overall pattern of study findings is consistently positive. Findings from the RCT or QED studies may be generalized beyond the study context. The studies were conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.

Applicants classifying their evidence as **Strong** must submit up to two evaluation reports from external sources or evaluations published in peer-reviewed articles as separate attachments.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification / Additional Information	Responsive Needs little Additional Information	Total Score
d. NOTICE PRIORITY	0	1	3	

- The applicant proposed program fits within one or more of the 2016 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined on page 3 of the NOFO and more fully described in the NOFO Glossary.
- The applicant clearly describes how the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed on page 3 and in the Glossary.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification / Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
e. MEMBER TRAINING	0	2	4	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to the rules including prohibited activities.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification / Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
f. MEMBER SUPERVISION	0	1	2	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will provide members with excellent guidance and support throughout their service.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE	0	1.5	3	

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to establish connections with each other and the broader National Service network to build esprit de corps.
- The applicant clearly describes how the program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the programs operate.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
h. COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION	0	1	2	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how the staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Rationale and Approach/Program Design:

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY – 25 points total

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING	0	1-5	6-10	

- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants effectively.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.

As documentation of community support and commitment to the program; please procure, keep on file, but do not submit to CNCS, letter(s) from the applicant's most significant community partner(s). The letter(s) should include what the partner(s) see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification/ Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
b. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	0	7.5	15	

- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable).
- The AmeriCorps members service will not duplicate, displace, or supplant volunteers, staff and/or interns.

c. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees (recompeting applicants and formula grantees only)

- The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member enrollment, in the most recent full year of program operations, or if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member retention, in the most recent full year of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes any compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk identified during the last three years of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY:

4. COST EFFECTIVENESS and BUDGET ADEQUACY -25 points total

Cost Per MSY – Cost effectiveness will be evaluated by analyzing cost per MSY in relation to the program design. Having a low cost per member is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. If the applicant requests above the maximum, it must justify its request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

All recompeting and continuation Grantees requesting a higher cost per MSY than in the previous year must include a compelling rationale for this increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by grantee share. This applies even if the increased cost per MSY is less than the maximum or if the increase is due to increased costs associated with the grant.

Applications that are Cost-Reimbursement grants: (\$13,730/MSY maximum)

Applications that are Fixed Price grants (\$13,430/MSY maximum)

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification / Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
a. COST EFFECTIVENESS	0	9	18	

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program. This applies to Fixed Amount, EAP, and Cost Reimbursement grants.
- The applicant, if recompeting, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see Glossary) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information Missing	Marginally Responsive Needs Clarification / Additional Information	Responsive Needs Little Additional Information	Total Score
b. BUDGET ADEQUACY	0	3.5	7	

BUDGET ADEQUACY

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors and proposed costs are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the award.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.
- Match is submitted with adequate information to support the amount written in the budget.

Applicants must fill out the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget narrative (requested information in the budget screens):

- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy:

5. Evaluation Summary or Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 points)

- If the applicant is competing for the first time, they will enter N/A in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field since it pertains only to recompeting Grantees.
- If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time the program has submitted their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.
- If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program has submitted their evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period.

Evaluation plans must include the following:

- A short description of the theory of change, or why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- Outcome of interest - clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- Research questions to be addressed by the study-concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- Study components- a) A proposed research design for the evaluation including a rationale for the design selected; b) description of the sampling methods, measurement tools, and data collection procedures, and c) an analysis plan;
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- The estimated budget.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

A program will be considered a recompetiting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (see Glossary) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompetiting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, summary, or completed evaluation.

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the report to ensure the narrative does not exceed the character limits when entered in e-Grants.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompetiting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this Notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at: https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Evaluation Summary or Plan:

6. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

7. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

8. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

The performance measures this applicant proposes:		YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are National Performance Measures		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align with the application narrative		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align with the logic model submitted by the applicant		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has targets that are reasonable - not too low and/or not too high for the # of AmeriCorps members requested		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align logically, i.e., the results of interventions provided by AmeriCorps members should, in fact, result in what the applicant proposes as an outcome		
The measurement tools this applicant proposes:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequately measure results		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Need to be strengthened		